SPEEDY MEDICAL ATTENTION PRAISED IN SAVING FORMER UNO QB'S LEG. SPORTS

Omaha World-Herald

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2017 • SUNRISE EDITION • REAL. FAIR. ACCURATE.

FEDERAL JUDGE NOMINEE

American Bar Association calls Omahan not qualified

By Joseph Morton
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Omaha attorney Steve Grasz faces a rockier road to the federal bench after the American Bar Association on Monday deemed him not qualified and questioned his ability to set aside ideological convictions to decide cases fairly.

That assessment was based in part on evaluating Grasz's writings, as well as more than 200 interviews with people in a position to evaluate his professional qualifications, according to a statement by the bar association.

Steve Grasz

"Many questioned whether Mr. Grasz would be able to detach himself from his deeply held social agenda and political loyalty to be able to judge objectively, with compassion and without bias," according to the statement by Pam Bresnahan, chairwoman of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary.

President Donald Trump nominated Grasz to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals after he was recommended for the seat by both of Nebraska's U.S. senators.

Nominees to the powerful appellate courts typically receive intense scrutiny from lawmakers, but the ABA report will make it that much tougher for Grasz when he appears Wednesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Now a senior counsel at Husch Blackwell LLP in Omaha, Grasz has been politically active over the years and previously served as Nebraska's chief deputy attorney general.

He has served as legal counsel to the campaigns of Gov. Pete Ricketts, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Nebraskans for the Death Penalty.

Grasz did not respond to a request for comment. His supporters, however, defended his integrity and ability to serve as a judge.

And they slammed the bar association as a liberally biased organization out to besmirch a good man's name for political purposes.

The ABA standing committee that reviews judicial nominations backed the "not qualified" rating unanimously with one abstention.

Only two judicial nominees have received unanimous "not qualified" ratings since 1989, said Carl Tobias, a professor at the University of Richmond School of Law who specializes in federal judicial selection.

"It's very rare," Tobias said,

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THREE INDICTED

Trump distances self from Manafort

White House minimizes development; one ex-aide's guilty plea to lying about Russia link may pose trouble

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special counsel Robert Mueller's charges Monday against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and two other former aides marked a new phase in his sprawling investigation into Russia and President Donald Trump, underscoring the ongoing threat that Mueller poses to the president.

Trump immediately sought to distance himself after Manafort and Rick Gates pleaded not guilty to a 12-count indictment alleging money laundering, conspiracy and other offenses, and as another former aide, George Papadopoulos, was revealed to be cooperating with authorities after entering a guilty plea Oct. 5 for lying to the FBI.

White House officials were publicly optimistic about Mueller's investigation wrapping up swiftly, but the probe is far from over and its reach still uncertain.

One of the three aides repeatedly sought to arrange a meeting between then-candidate Trump and senior Russian officials in London or in Moscow, according to court documents.

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Paul Manafort
He pleaded not guilty Monday to a 12-count indictment alleging money laundering, conspiracy and other offenses.

MORE ON PAGE 3A
Rick Gates' relationship with Paul Manafort goes back decades.
A Facebook disclosure and other developments in the Russia probe.

COOKING UP JUST THE RIGHT SCARE

Story by
Chris Peters

Illustration by
Matt Haney

THE WORLD-HERALD

Watch a scary movie. On mute. Visit a haunted house. In the daylight.

Take one element away from a scary scene, and the effect isn't the same. But when a series of perfect elements come together, fear comes to life.

More Americans are celebrating Halloween this year than ever, and they're spending more money, too, according to the National Retail Federation.

In the wake of a recent dip in overall film ticket revenue, the R-rated horror movie "It" bested an 18-year-old box office record set by "The Sixth Sense," and another 2017 film, "Annabelle: Creation," nearly cracked the top 10.

It's safe to say that Americans crave a good scare. It's why they flock to haunted houses, line up for midnight movies and feed demand for pop-up Halloween superstores.

"Being scared gives you a sort of a high — you get lots of adrenaline and dopamine in your sys-

See Fear: Page 2

Plant will not be in Nebraska

Omaha developer pulls application for gas-fired facility that would power Beatrice. **Midlands**

Judge bars transgender ban

Ruling says administration provided no solid evidence for why ban from the military is needed. **Page 4A**

Omaha forecast

High: 43 **Low:** 32
Sunny, chilly **Details:** 5B

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BENGHAZI ATTACKS

Capture of militant signifies that 4 victims 'will never be forgotten'

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. special operations forces captured a militant in Libya who is accused of playing an instrumental role in the Benghazi attacks five years ago, officials said Monday.

President Donald Trump identified the militant as Mustafa al-Imam and said his capture signified that the four Americans who died "will never be forgotten."

Justice Department officials were escorting al-Imam by military plane to the United States, where he's expected to be tried in federal court.

"Our memory is deep and our reach is long, and we will not rest in our efforts to find and bring the perpetrators of the heinous attacks in Benghazi to justice," Trump said.

The Navy SEAL-led raid marked the first publicly known operation since Trump took office to target those accused of involvement in Benghazi.

U.S. forces captured al-Imam just before midnight local time Sunday in Misrata, on Libya's north coast, U.S. officials said.

He was taken to a U.S. Navy ship at the Misrata port for transport by military plane to Washington, where he's expected to arrive within the next two days, one of the officials said.

Once on American soil, al-Imam will face trial in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia as the FBI continues to investigate, the Justice Department said.

He faces three criminal charges that were filed in May 2015 but only recently unsealed:

See Benghazi: Page 2

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